

The 2008 Chicago Bar Foundation *Investing In Justice* Campaign

What: A community-wide fundraising campaign through which thousands of individual attorneys in law firms and corporations throughout the Chicago area come together around a cause uniquely important to us as lawyers: to build the capacity of our pro bono and legal aid system to help ensure that everyone in our community, especially low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans, has access to justice. **Dan Webb**, the Chairman of Winston & Strawn, is the Chair for this 2nd Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign*.

Why: There are less than 300 legal aid attorneys in the Chicago area to serve the more than 1 million low-income Cook County residents. As a result, more than half of low-income Chicagoans who seek legal assistance that is often critical to their safety and independence are turned away and left to solve complex legal problems on their own because pro bono and legal aid organizations do not have the capacity to serve them.

As lawyers, we have a special responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to our justice system. The huge gap in access to justice today is a crisis not just for our community, but for our profession and our overall system of justice. It is up to us as lawyers to take the lead to close this gap, and the *Investing in Justice Campaign* is an opportunity for lawyers, law firms and corporations to do just that.

Who: As the charitable arm of The Chicago Bar Association, **The Chicago Bar Foundation (CBF)** works to ensure that everyone in the Chicago area has access to our justice system, particularly the low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans who most need the protections of our civil legal system

The CBF plays a distinct and vital role in the community by taking a system-wide approach to tackling this issue. Through grants, advocacy and other leadership, we:

- Advance the work of our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations;
- Enable dedicated lawyers to pursue careers in legal aid and help pro bono attorneys most effectively supplement their efforts; and
- Make the courts and legal system more user-friendly and accessible for all.

What we are asking: The target level for contributions is a minimum of \$500 for each law firm partner or senior counsel and \$100 for each associate or junior counsel. Law firms and corporations also are being asked to match the individual contributions of their lawyers. *As the purpose of the Campaign is to build the capacity of the existing pro bono and legal aid system, all contributions for the Campaign should be above and beyond other contributions to the CBF and individual pro bono and legal aid organizations.*

How Campaign funds will be used: 100% of the funds raised in the 2008 Campaign will be used to build the capacity of Chicago's pro bono and legal aid system. The CBF is underwriting all expenses for the Campaign from its general fund.

In last year's the inaugural *Campaign*, all funds raised were used to directly address a growing crisis in our justice system: the combination of inadequate salaries and skyrocketing law school debt that is making it economically untenable for attorneys to pursue careers in legal aid. Based on our determination that reversing this trend is the most immediate priority for increasing the capacity of our pro bono and legal aid system, addressing that issue was the sole focus of the 1st annual Campaign and will continue to be a primary emphasis in the 2008 *Campaign*. The CBF will use all of the 2008 Campaign funds for grants to (a) strengthen Chicago's pro bono and legal aid organizations, (b) give these organizations the means to continue increasing their attorney salaries to sustainable levels, and (c) underwrite innovative projects that make the justice system more user-friendly and accessible for those in need.

When: March 2008.

How: Firms and corporations should designate a Vice Chair for the Campaign along with a captain(s) to lead the campaign within their respective organizations; CBF staff will provide all necessary campaign tools and support. *For more information about how your firm or corporation can become a part of the **CBF Investing in Justice Campaign**, contact Bob Graves (312-554-1205 or bglaves@chicagobar.org) or David Gee (312-554-1209 or dgee@chicagobar.org) at The Chicago Bar Foundation.*